



COLORADO

Department of
Higher Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\$600,000 grant to pay for FAFSA Completion Project

DENVER - Oct. 13, 2014 - The Kresge Foundation has awarded a \$600,000, three-year grant to the Colorado Department of Higher Education and Colorado Department of Education for expansion of an innovative FAFSA Completion Project to other states.

The grant will allow the two agencies to bolster efforts to gain access to education beyond high school for low-income, first generation, and underrepresented students through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. This project will scale the Colorado model of the FAFSA Completion Project (<https://highered.colorado.gov/fafsa/default.aspx>) to 24 partner states. Colorado, an early adopter and leader in terms of FAFSA completion data sharing, will develop and provide the necessary technical tools for partner states to implement and sustain their own FAFSA Completion Projects.

FAFSA completion is vital to both access to postsecondary opportunities and completion. For student access, the FAFSA is the only means to gain access to the \$150 billion available in federal student aid. Nationally, research suggests that 90 percent of high school graduates who complete the FAFSA enroll in college.

In 2010, Colorado invested in creating a FAFSA completion tool to help all school districts and high schools in the state more effectively and efficiently identify students who had not completed the FAFSA so that additional support could be provided to those students.

Colorado is continually expanding the number of education providers who have access to the tool's customized FAFSA completion reports. The Colorado FAFSA Completion Project now serves 53 percent of Colorado's 2013-14 high school seniors. As a result, Colorado has replicated a key U.S. Department of Education finding: in districts in which high school seniors participated in the FAFSA Completion Project, 85 percent enrolled in college within 12 months of high school graduation.

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and investing in arts and culture, education, work in the environment, health, human services and community development efforts in Detroit. Fostering greater access to and success in postsecondary education for low-income, minority and first-generation college students is the focus of Kresge's education grantmaking. In 2013, the Board of Trustees awarded nearly \$20 million in grants to support higher education in the United States and South Africa, with half benefiting U.S. community colleges. For more information, visit kresge.org or follow @kresgedu.



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